

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application.

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Crawford et al. (U.S. 4,022,121) in view of Peterson, Jr. (U.S. 4,927,305). It is respectfully submitted that, as now presented, base claim 1 is clearly patentable.

Specifically, among other structure, claim 1 requires a knotter drive shaft to be disposed along a **drive axis**, a plurality of drive gears having hubs mounted for rotation with, and **axial movement along**, the drive shaft, an adjustment mechanism spanning an **axial** gap between opposed surfaces of adjacent knotter assemblies, with the adjustment mechanism including at least one member mounted for **axial threaded adjustment parallel to said drive axis**.

Crawford et al. disclose a drive shaft 18 disposed along a drive axis A (FIG. 2) and having knot tying devices 30, 32 and 34 mounted thereon for rotation therewith and for moving axial therealong. Located between adjacent ones of the devices 30, 32 and 34 are adjustment assemblies 88 including cams 90 and 92 which may be rotated relative to each other about the drive axis so as to adjust the spacing between the tying devices 30, 32, and 34. The cams 90 and 92 are each provided with threaded holes extending **radially** to said drive axis, and received in the threaded holes are set screws 94 which are threaded into tight engagement with the shaft 18 in order to hold the cams 90 and 92 in positions for establishing the desired spacing between the tying devices 30, 32 and 34. Loosening of the set screws 94 is prevented by lock nuts (no reference numeral) received on the screws 94.

Therefore, Crawford et al. clearly **do not** teach "at least one member mounted for axial threaded adjustment **parallel to said drive axis**" (emphasis added). While the Examiner contends that Crawford et al. do not teach the required locking device, the lock nut associated with the set screws 94 performs the locking function.

Peterson, Jr. does disclose a device 10 that works to place stress in a bolt by way of placing an axial load on the nut threaded onto the bolt. However, it is not seen how this teaching would serve any useful purpose in the Crawford et al. design which already includes a locking device, and certainly is not a teaching for effecting axial spacing between two knotter assemblies, as claimed.

Thus, claim 1 is thought allowable.

Claims 2-10 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are likewise thought allowable, with it being noted that the Examiner considers claims 6-10 to contain allowable subject matter..

Claim 2 is thought allowable for the additional reason that it requires a jackbolt to be threaded into one of the opposed surfaces of adjacent knotter assemblies and to have a head engaged with the other of the opposed surfaces, and no such structure is found in either Crawford et al. or Peterson, Jr.

Claim 3 has been amended to depend from claim 2 to cure an antecedent basis problem, and is thought allowable for the same reason that claim 2 is thought allowable. Claim 3 is thought allowable for the further reason that it requires a second jackbolt to be disposed diametrically opposite from the first named jackbolt and no such structure is present in either Crawford et al. or Peterson, Jr.

In conclusion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

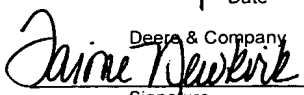
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Respectfully,

  
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